



Senator Teresa Lubbers

200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

News from the Indiana State Senate

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News You Can Use Government Programs Help Seniors Get Prescription Drugs

There are high costs involved in bringing prescription drugs to the open market. Part of that price tag is passed on to consumers, which is a hardship for patients who do not have drug coverage.

Elderly Hoosiers spend an average of more than \$1,000 per year for prescription drugs. The state and federal governments have developed several programs designed to provide affordable prescription drugs for low-income seniors.

The federal government has launched a new drug discount card. Medicare will be providing reliable and accessible information. Anyone enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B and not receiving Medicare benefits is eligible for the discount drug card program. For more information or to become enrolled, you may call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) or visit www.medicare.gov.

HoosierRx is a state program that helps shift the cost of prescription drugs away from low-income seniors. HoosierRx was enacted four years ago by the General Assembly and allows seniors who qualify to receive a 75 percent discount on the cost of medications. This program will be coordinated with the Medicare discount drug card to maximize savings. Low-income seniors can sign up for the HoosierRx Drug Card by calling, toll-free, **1-866-267-4679** or by visiting www.in.gov/HoosierRx. Local pharmacies will also have applications.

Additional Resources

Leaders from the prescription drug industry have joined the government's efforts to ease the financial burden that prescription drugs pose on senior citizens. A number of the major companies now offer their own program for low-income seniors:

LillyAnswers
1 (877) RX-LILLY (1-877-795-4559)
www.lillyanswers.com

Merck Patient Assistance Program
1 (800) 727-5400
www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/

Pfizer Share Card
1 (800) 717-6005
www.pfizersharecard.com

Together Rx
1 (800) 865-7211
www.together-rx.com

For a complete directory of prescription drug patient assistance programs visit www.helpingpatients.org or call 1 (800) 762-4636.

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News from the Indiana State Senate

A Letter to My Constituents

Dear Friends:

With summer days and vacation time slipping away, I am reminded of the importance of a quality education and a good job. Clearly, the two are linked and are critical to individual satisfaction and our state's progress. While statistics are often used to prove that we're doing well or poorly, I know most Hoosiers believe that we need to do better in preparing our young people for 21st century jobs. Likewise, we must ensure that these jobs are available if we are going to reverse the brain drain.

As a member of the Senate Education Committee and the Economic Development and Technology Committee, I remain committed to both of these goals: a high quality education for every young person and a thriving economy that produces new job opportunities. Indiana's school reform package known as Public Law 221 and the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 focus on improving education by implementing high academic standards and an accountability system. Both laws also stress the value of a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.

The recent recession has damaged Indiana's economy, slowing revenue growth, eliminating jobs and reducing per capita income. Today, the average Hoosier worker earns only about 91 cents for every \$1.00 earned by the average worker nationwide. This is unacceptable. Until state revenues pick up, the ability to adequately fund priorities like education and health care will remain a problem.

Beginning in January, the General Assembly will start work on the state budget for the next biennium. Much of the discussion will center on funding priorities, but it is equally important to continue to find ways to diversify the economy, stimulate business investment, and curtail spending.

I look forward to representing your interests and welcome your counsel as we work to improve education and revive Indiana's economy.

Sincerely,

Teresa Lubbers

Senator Lubbers' Committee Assignments

Sen. Lubbers serves on four standing committees of the Indiana State Senate, including:

- Education
- Economic Development and Technology
- Judiciary
- Pensions and Labor

In addition, Sen. Lubbers has been assigned to represent the state of Indiana as a member of the following committees:

- **Midwestern Higher Education Commission**
- **Education Commission of the States**
- **Education Roundtable**
- **Indiana School for the Blind**
- **Indiana White River State Park Commission**

During the 2004 legislative session, Sen. Lubbers maintained a 100 percent voting record.

Consumer Information

Unclaimed Property

The Attorney General reports thousands of unclaimed property listings all across the state of Indiana. Some possible sources of unclaimed property are: credit balances, old savings and checking accounts, unpaid wages, mutual fund shares, insurance proceeds, uncashed traveler's checks, and utility deposits.

You can contact the Indiana Attorney General's office to see if you or a relative has a claim.

Visit www.indianaunclaimed.com or call, toll-free, **1-866-IN-CLAIM** (1-866-462-5246).

Unwanted Faxes

Contact the Federal Communications Commission to report any unsolicited faxes. You can file a formal complaint at www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html or call, toll-free, **1-888-255-5322**.

Direct Mail Lists

Tired of receiving advertising through the mail? Remove your name from direct mail lists by visiting

www.dmaconsumers.org or write to:

Mail Preference Service
Attn: Dept 12851374
Direct Marketing Association
PO Box 282
Carmel, NY 10512

National No-Call List

Indiana led the way with the creation of a no-call registry. Federal legislators followed suit by creating a national do not call list. Consumers now can list both home and mobile phone numbers in order to prevent unsolicited telemarketing calls. To register your phone number on the national list, visit www.donotcall.gov or call, toll-free, **1-888-382-1222**. Additions to the list are updated every three months.



Looking FORWARD

Legislators prepare for the upcoming session

Several interim study committees have convened this year to study specific issues that are facing our state. The Legislative Council appoints topics to each panel, and the committees will make recommendations to the General Assembly later this year.

The [Property Tax Replacement Commission](#) is studying the effects of eliminating 50 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent of net property tax levies and identifying revenue sources capable of replacing property taxes. The commission has broken down into small groups that will work on five major issues during the year: 1) Property Tax Administration Issues; 2) Local Government Services; 3) Long Term Debt Issues; 4) Other State Tax Systems; and 5) Property Tax Levies and Controls. The goal is to lessen local governments' dependence on property taxes and create a more equitable and fair method of funding local government. The commission is also studying methods of increasing local government efficiency as a means of cutting costs and subsequently, taxes. The committee has already met four times since its creation in March of this year.

The [Interim Study Committee on Technology Issues](#) is studying broadband Internet matters, Geographic Information Systems funding, and the impact of technological advances on the Open Door and Access to Public Records Act.

The [Interim Study Committee on Professional Licensing and Consumer](#)

[Issues](#) is considering minimum mandatory training standards for firefighters, certification of emergency management organizations and professional emergency managers. Members will also examine predatory gasoline pricing and mortgage lending policies.

The [Interim Study Committee on Education Issues](#) is reviewing state educational mandates and school-based mentoring programs.

The [Interim Study Committee on Agriculture and Small Business](#) is studying regulation of dog and cat sales and dog auctions, as well as development of equine and agriculture industries in Indiana.

The [Interim Study Committee on Transportation Issues](#) is studying urban mass transportation matters, regional transportation funding, antique license plates, and Bureau of Motor Vehicles services and security matters.

The [Interim Study Committee on Corporate Taxation](#) is analyzing the use of passive investment corporations by companies doing business in Indiana.

Just like with standing committees during session, citizens are encouraged to testify and voice their opinion at interim study committees. For a comprehensive list of upcoming committee meetings log onto www.in.gov/legislative/interim.



State Faces Tough Budget Decisions in 2005

Indiana Personal Income Lags the Nation

On July 12, the state closed the books for Fiscal Year 2004. According to official figures released by the State Budget Agency, the state is expected to have a "surplus" or "reserve" of just \$300 million on June 30, 2005 – the close of the current budget cycle. As shown on **Figure 1**, this means the state's reserve will have declined by nearly \$2 billion since 1998.

The problem is that state spending has been exceeding state revenues for the past several years. State revenue collections actually decreased in both Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002 before showing a 0.5 percent increase in 2003. Revenue collections increased by about 2.7 percent for Fiscal Year 2004, the year that just ended.

In order to avoid big spending cuts in education and health care, the state



Senator Lubbers works on a bill with State Auditor Connie Nass.

has been using the surplus and employing spending delays and other temporary solutions. These measures are only one-time temporary fixes and cannot be sustained. While it may seem like Indiana's economy is improving, the state's financial condition actually remains very weak.

A \$300 million reserve sounds like a lot of money. With an annual \$11.2 billion General Fund Budget, including big items such as \$4.3 billion for K-12 education, \$2.1 billion for local property tax relief, \$1.4 billion for universities and \$1.2 billion for Medicaid, \$300 million really is not a sufficient reserve. In fact, the State Budget spends more than \$30 million per day every day of the year. A \$300 million reserve barely funds 10 days of expenses.

The root of Indiana's budget problems is slow revenue growth. Part of the problem is job loss due to the recession. But the real problem is that Indiana lags the nation in personal income growth. As reflected in **Figure 2**, the problem has steadily grown since 1996.

As Hoosier workers earn less, state tax revenues lag as well. If Indiana workers earned the same as the national average, the subsequent gain in tax revenues would erase the state's structural deficit. Indiana needs to improve its economy relative to the nation by reversing declining per capita income.

